

George Thompson Ross to Andrew Jackson, October 3, 1814, from Correspondence of Andrew Jackson. Edited by John Spencer Bassett.

COLONEL GEORGE T. ROSS TO JACKSON.1

1 Colonel Ross commanded the 44th Regiment of Infantry. Jackson considered the immunity that the pirates had enjoyed in Louisiana a national disgrace, and issued orders that they should be broken up. Colonel Ross's report shows that it was not a difficult thing to do.

New Orleans, October 3, 1814.

Sir, I have the Honor to address you from this City, whither I have returned after an absence of twenty days, on a fatigueing but as it has turned out a fortunate expedition; my letter of the 8th September gave you the information of the intended attack on the Pirate Lafites Establishment. On the 11th of September at one in the morning I embarked with a detachment of seventy of my Regiment (the Governor having requested my personal services) on board of Gun barges, prepared for the occasion by Commodore Patterson, and dropped down the river, arriving at the English Turn Barracks by Sun rise, thus passing the City and suburbs with out being observed. On the night of the 13th we arrived at the Balize and the 15th in the morning embarked on board the Gun Vessels, reascended the Mississippi, to the South west pass, crossed the Bar and on the morning of the 16th stood in for the Harbor, of Grand Terre. The Vessels of Lafitte then plainly in view, formed in Line of Battle, awaited our approach altho: in some confusion, as our appearance was the first intimation they had of our intentions. The Gun Vessels on board of which were the Commodore and myself both grounded on going in, we however immediately took to our Barges; the other four Gun Vessels with the small schooner the

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Sea horse, Two Gun Barges and a ships Cutter continuing their Course as was ordered in the event of any of the Vessels grounding in crossing the Bar. The Enemy suddenly broke Cutting loose some and firing others of their Fleet. They were pursued by such boats as could even be brought within Cannon Shot of them who succeeded in saving a Fine Schooner with a Twelve pounder and four smaler pieces fired by the Enemy. The Gallantry of Lieut Jones of the Navy² effected this, who boarded after the vessel had been a long time on fire, The fore shrouds and foresail burnt as also the Plank around the foremast. Lt. Gordon of the 44th³ and Purser Shields distinguished themselves In the pursuit. Of mr. Shields it is not my province to Speak as the Commodore will do him justice; but as it respects Mr. Gordon I am proud he belongs to my Regiment.

2 Thomas ap Catesby Jones, afterward commodore.

3 Smith W. Gordon of Louisiana.

Many prisoners have been taken some of consequence, who have been delivered over to the Laws of the Country they have been offending by outrageous acts of Piracy and generally believed of horrible murders, inasmuch as we never hear of the Crews of the vessels taken by them. After burning all the Establishments, Telegraphes along the Coast, etc. of this Band repairing the vessels taken (except those we were obliged to Burn, to wit an unrigged Brig and two Schooners aground) possessing ourselves of their Merchandise to as great an Extent as time would allow, we with our Prises Eight in number, proceeded to Sea, Entered the South west pass and on the first of October in the evening anchored the whole Fleet opposite this City.

I cannot but congratulate this Station on the acquisition of this Fleet, the injury is done not only to Lafite but is a loss to our British Enemy. The letters of Col. Nichols his Proclamation with Capt. Peircys orders which have been forwarded you inform you of their views and the Enclosure No I shews Lafites acceptation. This may be termed the first enterprise of the 44th and from the conduct of the officers and men, I presage to my

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Country a valuable regiment, particularly as you have with you some [of] its officers and men. I wish it was in my power to fill it Speedily. The scattered population of this state the coming in of all most all my officers from Tennessee, the Regiment not more than half officered and many of them not Speaking a word of English are heavy impediments. I am however after all Casualties which have happened since recruiting Commenced Four Hundred Strong. The prospect brightens too in recruiting. Lieut Peters made Twenty five recruits at Baton Rouge last week, and as the militia will Soon cease paying heavy Bounties for Substitutes I calculate to increase rapidly if Funds shall be furnished me sufficiently large to carry it on with Spirit. my Supplies have been received in dribbs, and irregularly; the paymaster Sometimes informing me he has no funds for the 44th at others he can spare a small sum. Frequently when a particular Station is successful and apply for funds I am without it. This will however from information recvd by district Paymaster Pemberton not long be the case.

A Mr. Patteson has applied for the discharge of Jeremiah Hinton of the 44th from Tennessee; this old Gentleman has one or two Sons in Service which he appears to rejoice at and only asks the discharge of Hinton in consequence of his being married having several children and some Estate which he says is known to you. He promises me a younger man in his place and if it meets your approbation I have no objections. Enclosed 7 is a plate of Barataria, Painted and Laid down by Lafon⁴ from my observations and soundings taken Some Eighteen months since but found by Captain Patterson and myself Correct.

⁴ See p. 63, n. 2, *ante*.

I hope sincerely your health is reestablished and am with Respect